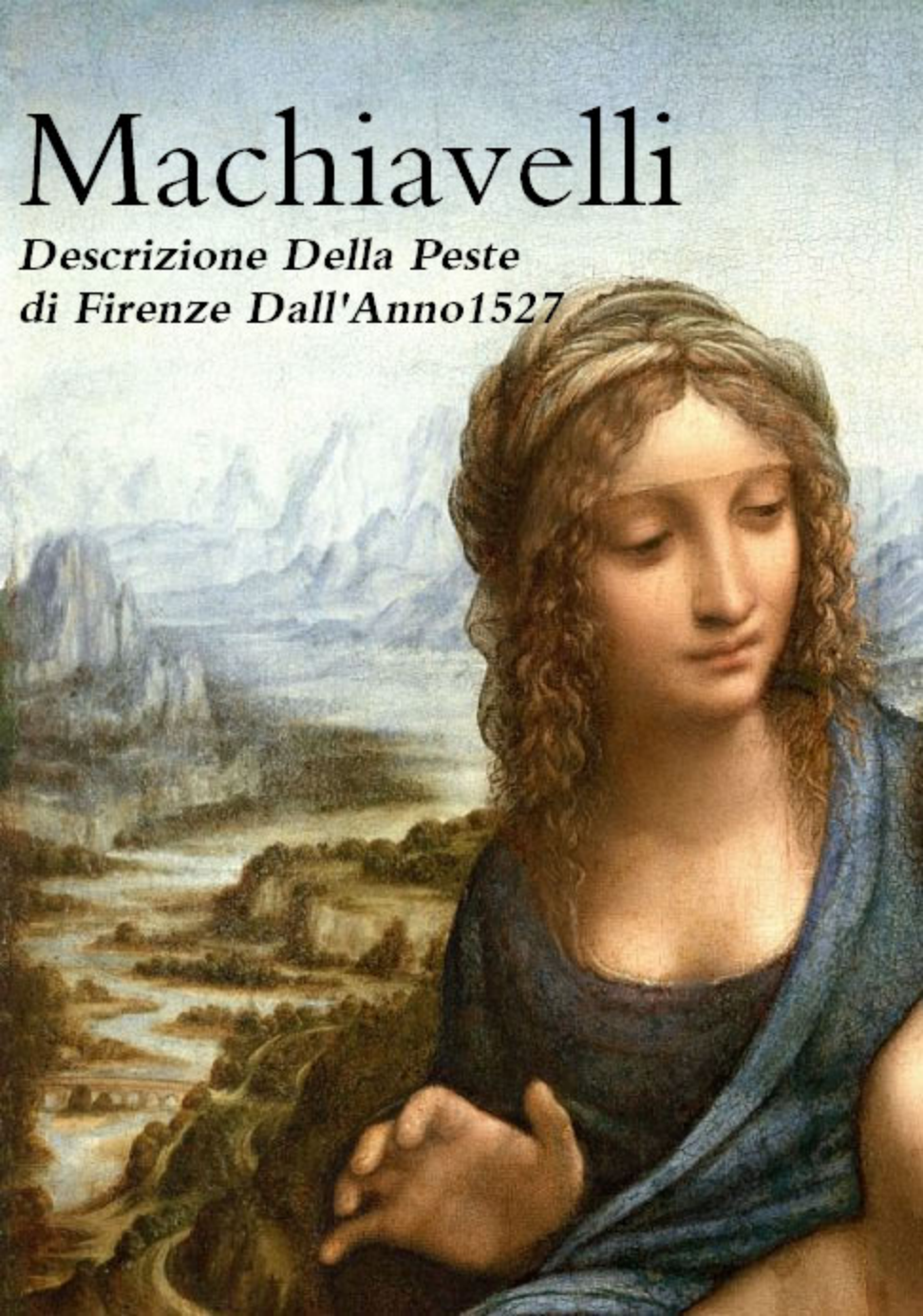
Machiavelli

Descrizione Della Peste di Firenze Dall'Anno1527



THE ITALIAN EDITION OF THE *PISTOLA*

Pistola fatta per la peste

[84r]

[3v] Dilettissimo et da me molto honorato compare. Se bene la dolce uostra compagnia m'e stata sempre giocondissima; et sempre ho preso singulare piacere, non solo degli honesti et cortesi costumi, ma de piacieuoli et humanissimi ragionamenti uostri; non pero, per esserne stato qualche tempo priuo, come piu uolte è aduenuto per essere uoi absente, ò in piu graui occupationi inplicato, ho sentito dolore in parte alchuna simile a quello che di presente sento, per il lungo dimorare uostro lontano dalla citta. Il che io atribuisco a due principali cagioni. L'una credo che sia che crescendo sempre la uostra beniuolenzia uerso di me, con la continuatione di multiplicarne gl'infiniti uostri benefici, conuiene ancora che cresca laffettione mia inuerso di uoi; quantunque, essendoui io in tanti modi piu anni sono obligato, non pensassi che apena fusse possibile che piu crescere potesse. L'altra cagione e, **[4r]** che, segl'è uero che la moltitudine delle cose, et la diuersita di quelle distragga l'humane menti, io confessero che la uarieta delle conuersationi di molti amicj, la quale al presente mi mancha, non mi lassaua profondare, cosi intesamente nella ricordatione, et consideratione di uoi solo amico, et della uostra gentilissima consuetidine; della quale, essendone hora priuato, m'accorgo ch'io mancho in tutto di quello

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84r 1–2 Pistola … Villa] *B Omit* **3** Dilettissimo] Dilectissimo **3–4** dolce uostra compagnia] uostra dolce conpagnia **4** m'e stata] mi <e stata | *B* giocundissima • 'g' *added by L. Strozzi* **5** degli] delli | piacieuoli] piaceuoli **6** esserne] *A* essere **7** è] e | uoi • 'u' *obscured by spreading ink* | ò] o | graui • *followed by indecipherable erasure* **8** alchuna] alcuna **8–9** *B* ho…sento • *marginal addition by L. Strozzi with % sign indicating insertion of text, and deletion of the following underlined linear text:* ho sentito pari dolore anzi ne anche si male in parte alchuna a quello che al presente; *also in L. Strozzi's hand* **10** L'una] Luna **10** beniuolenzia] beniuolentia **11** multiplicarne • *first* 'l' *written over* 't' | multiplicarne] multiplicarnne | gl'infiniti] linfiniti | benefici] benefitij | ancora] anchora | laffettione] laffectione **12** inuerso] uerso | quantunque] quantunche **12–13** essendoui] sendoui **13** fusse] fussi **14** potesse • *interlinear addition with caret indicating placement* | **14** L'altra] Laltra | *B* e • *written as* e*, but better read as* è *following Strozzi's usage of* "e" *in B* | e] *A* et (*sic*) • *conjunction as recorded by Strozzi* | segl'è uero] segli e uero **15** la diuersita] *A* della diuersita | l'humane] lhumane **16** amicj] amici • 'ci' *trimmed* **16–17** la quale … mancha, non … profondare • *phrases originally written in reverse order; emended with interlinear Arabic numbers: 2 over* non … profondare*, and 1 over* la quale …mancha | *B* profondare • *first* 'o' *trimmed* **17** ricordatione] recordatione **19** essendone] sendone | m'accorgo ch'io mancho] maccorgo che io manco

THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE *PISTOLA*

An Epistle Written Concerning the Plague

To my most beloved and highly honoured friend: although your sweet companionship has always kept me truly happy, and I have always taken singular pleasure, not only from your honest and courteous manners, but also from your pleasant and exceptionally humane reasoning: I am not happy, however, when I am deprived of it for some time, as it often happens that you are absent, or involved in graver activities. I have felt sorrow in part somewhat similar to that which I feel at present, due to the length of time that you remain far away from your city. I attribute this present sadness to two principle causes. The first I believe is, that since you are always increasing your benevolence towards me, with the continual multiplication of your infinite favors, it follows yet again that my affection towards you increases; although having been indebted to you for many years in various ways, I did not think that it was possible that my affection for you might possibly grow even more. The second reason is, that if it is true that the multitude of earthly things, and their diversity distract the human mind, then I will confess that the variety of conversations with my many friends, which at present I miss, was not allowing me to absorb (or immerse) myself as intensely in the recollection and consideration of you, truest friend, and of your most gentlemanly customs, of which, since at present I am deprived, I notice that I lack completely

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84r 3 "compare" *or* "friend" • though "compare" implies an even deeper level of familiarity, friendship, and companionship than "amico" or "friend" in English. Francesco Vettori frequently referred to Machiavelli as his "compare." See Niccolò Machiavelli, *Opere di Niccolò Machiavelli: Volume Terzo: Lettere*, ed. Franco Gaeta (Turin: Unione Tipografico Editrice Torinese 1984), Letter 205, dated 15 March 1513, where Vettori refers to Machiavelli as "Compare mio caro." "Compare" can also be used as a sign of respect, and was sometimes used by clients when they addressed patrons, or students when they addressed teachers, which is probably the case here. Strozzi dedicated the *Pistola* to his childhood teacher, Girolamo di Maestro Luca. See chap. 3 for more background on Maestro Luca.

84r 13–14 "quantunque … potesse" *or* "although … more" • is a very difficult passage to translate. In the original, one finds "sono" in this sentence, but it is nearly impossible to make sense of Strozzi's phrase when "sono" is included. I chose to render the gerund as "having" and intentionally overlooked "sono."

piaciere che altre uolte solamente soleuo sentire essere scemato alquanto. Et non solo sono d'un tale amico, et di tutti gl'altri ben cari miei compagni priuo, ma ancora di huomini a me noti, tanto che, riscontrandogli, mi fusse lecito il salutarli: che ueramente se l'habito nostro ciuile, quantunque pocò si uegha, non fosse, io mi crederei tal hora essere peregrino in qualch'altra citta. Onde, poi che il cielo non ci permette, unico et diletto compare mio, **[4v]** per la mortifera pestilenzia pasciere piu gl'orecchie di quei dolci ragionamenti, et gl'occhi di quei grati obietti, che gia soleano ogni noiosa cura alleggierirne, non ci priuiamo almeno di uisitarcci con lettere, conforto non piccolo in tutte le miserie humane. Per cio mi sono io mosso (sapendo maxime quanto a chi è dilungato dalla patria è grato l'intendere ogni minima nouella) a scriuere tutto quello che nella egregia citta nostra han uisto, quantunque non asciuti, gl'infelicj occhi miei; et se bene la matteria poco diletto ui rechera, l'intender uoj essere fuor di si periglioso luogo ui fia grato senza che, il certificarui ch'io sia uiuo, di cui forse la morte inteso harete, ui douera far men graue ogni maniconia ò altra dolorosa noia.

84r 20 piaciere] piacere | *B* sentire • 'n' *trimmed* **21** d'un] dun | gl'altri] gli altri **21–2** compagni] conpagni • 'ni' *trimmed* | ancora] anchora **23** mi fusse] mi fussi • *interlinear addition by L. Strozzi with caret indicating placement; replaces underlined, linear* mi sia | salutarli] salutargli | se l'habito] se lhabito **23–4** nostro … quantunque] nostro … quantunche • nostro *is a marginal addition by L. Strozzi with % sign indicating insertion before the interlinear addition* ciuile, *also by L. Strozzi. Emended phrase replaces the original linear text, also by L. Strozzi,* delle nostriale ueste quantunche • delle nostriali *underlined for deletion and* ueste *expunged by ink splash* **24** crederei] crederrei **25** qualch'altra] qualche altra **25–6** diletto] dilecto **26** mio • *interlinear addition by L. Strozzi, with caret indicating placement; not in B* | pestilenzia] pestilentia | pasciere] pascere | gl'orecchie] le orecchie **27** gl'occhi] gli occhi | obietti] obiecti **28** uisitarcci] *A* uisitarsi **30–1** *B* (sapendo …nouella) • *corrected by L. Strozzi from* /sapendo …nouella/ **30** è] e | è] e **31** l'intendere] lintendere **32** quantunque] quantunche | asciuti, gl'infelicj] asciutti, glinfelici **33** bene] ben | poco diletto] pöco dilecto **33–4** l'intender uoj … fuor] lintender uoi … fuori • *original linear text reads,* c l' essere uoi fuori • c l' *struck through by L. Strozzi* • lintender uoi • *interlinear addition by L. Stozzi with caret indicating placement* • uoi *after* essere *struck through*, *producing above reading* **34** luogo] loco | ch'io] che io **35** douera] douerra | far] fare **36** dolorosa • *third* 'o' *obscured by spreading ink*.

that pleasure, when on other occasions I merely used to listen to you to be satiated somewhat. And I am not only of such a friend, and of all of my other dear companions deprived, but also of the men known to me, so that, corresponding with them, I was able to greet them. Truly if our civic dress, although one seldom sees it, no longer existed, I would sometimes think myself to have wandered into some other city. Wherefore, since Heaven does not permit us, my only and beloved friend, by the deadly pestilence, to nourish our ears with more of those sweet discussions, and our eyes with those gracious subjects, which once used to lighten every tedious care, let us not deprive ourselves of visiting one another with letters; no little comfort in all of these human miseries. Therefore I am stirred (knowing how much one who is away from the fatherland is grateful to receive even the smallest piece of news) to write about all that I have seen in our distinguished city, with my wet and unfortunate eyes; and even though the matter will bring you little pleasure, hearing that you are out of so perilous a place should make you grateful. Furthermore, while it proves to you that I (of whose death perhaps you have heard) might yet live, it also will oblige you to make less grave every melancholy or other painful nuisance.

84r 30 "patria" *or* "fatherland" • for one of Machiavelli's most detailed definitions of *patria*, assuming that he wrote the work, see the opening lines of his *Discourse or Dialogue Concerning our Language*, 130–31 for English translation and 167–8 for Italian original in my *Politics, Patriotism and Language: Niccolò Machiavelli's* "Secular Patria" *and the Creation of an Italian National Identity* (New York: Peter Lang, 2005). It is quite likely that Machiavelli's concept of *patria* influenced Strozzi's use of the term in the *Pistola.* In this instance, I rendered *patria* as "fatherland"; below, I rendered it as "native city."

[9r] Non ardisco in sul foglio porre la timida mano per ordire si noioso [84v]
principio; anzi, quanto piu le tante miserie per la mente mi riuolgo, piu l'horrenda descriptione mi spauenta: et se bene il tutto ho uisto, mi rinuoua il raccontarlo doloroso pianto; ne so anche da che parte tale comminciamento fare mi deggia: et se lecito mi fusse, da tale proponimento indrieto mi ritrarrej. Il souerchio desio, nondimeno, il quale ho di sapere se ancora uoi uiuo sete, rompera ogni timore.

Non altrimenti che si resti una citta dalli infedeli forzatamente presa et poi abandonata, si truoua al presente la misera Fiorenza nostra. Parte degli habitatorj, si come uoi, la pestifera mortalita fuggiendo, per le sparte uille ridutti si sono, parte morti, parte in sul morire: in modo che le cose presenti ci offendano, le future ci minacciono; et cosi nella morte si trauaglia, nella uita si teme. Ò dannoso seculo! ò lagrimabile stagione! Le pulite et belle contrade, che piene di richi et nobilj cittadini essere soleuano, sono hora puzolente et brute, di poueri ripiene**;** per la impromptitudine de quali et paurose strida, dificilmente, et con timore si ua. Sono serrate le botteghe, gli exercizii fermi, i giudici, ò le corti, et i fori, tolti uia, prostrate le leggi. Hora si intende questo furto, hora quello homicidio: le piazze, i mercatj, doue adunarsi frequentemente i cittadini soleuano, sepolchri sono hora fatti, et di

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84v 2 per] far **3** l'horrenda] lorrenda **3–4** rinuoua] rinnuoua **4–5** comminciamento] cominciamento **5** *B* proponimento • *marginal addition in Machiavelli's hand, probably to replace the underlined, linear* proposto **6** indrieto] indietro | ritrarrej] ritrarrei • 'ri' *interlinear addition in Machiavelli's hand* **8** dalli] dagli **9** abandonata] abbandonata | degli] *A* dagli **10** habitatorj] habitatori **12** offendano] offendono | *B* trauaglia • *interlinear addition by L. Strozzi, probably to replace the linear* stenta, *in Machiavelli's hand* **13** ò] o | ò] o **14** nobilj] nobili **15** brute] brutte | impromptitudine] inpromtitudine **16** dificilmente … ua] difficilmente … ua • *interlinear addition, with caret indicating placement, by L. Strozzi; replaces the deleted, barely legible linear text* {non si puo ne andare}; *hypothetical transcription of text in Machiavelli's hand* | serrate] serate **17** exercizii] esercitii | i giudici ò *underlined, possibly for deletion, though retained in reading above* | *B* i giudici /o/ le corti • *marginal addition with % sign indicating placement* | et i fori] e fori | prostrate • *second* 'r' *interlinear addition with caret indicating placement* **18** si intende] sintende | furto • *interlinear addition to replace underlined* fruto (*sic*) | piazze] piaze | mercatj] mercati **19** soleuano, sepolchri] soleano, seplocri

I hardly dare to place my timid hand to the page to trace so troublesome a beginning; so that the more I mull over such miseries in the midst of the mind, the more I do recoil from the horrendous description of them: and although I have seen it all, to recount it renews painful tears; nor do I know where I ought to make a start; and if it were permitted me, from this weak undertaking, I would withdraw myself. But, the overwhelming desire that I have, to know if you are still alive, will overcome every fear.

One finds that our miserable Florence, at the present, resembles a city that has been sacked by the infidels and afterwards abandoned. Some of the inhabitants, such as yourself, have retired to country villas to escape the deadly plague; some are dead and others are approaching death; so that the while present circumstances offend us, the future threatens us; so as one struggles with death, one fears for one's life. Oh injurious age! Oh lamentable season! The neat and beautiful streets, which used to be bursting with rich and noble citizens, are now stinking, ugly and swarming with the poor. One passes by their impudent and fearful shrieks with difficulty and trepidation. The shops are locked, the businesses closed, the courts and the lawyers dragged away, prostrating the laws. Now one hears of this theft, now of that murder: the piazzas and markets, where the citizens used to be in the habit of gathering frequently, are now made into communal graves, and vile dens of thieves. Men go about alone, and in exchange for friends,

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84v 10 "ville" *or* "villas" • for a nearly identical passage concerning attempts by Florentine aristocracy to escape the plague, see Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, trans. Guido Waldman, ed. Jonathan Usher (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 8 (hereafter *Decameron* [1998]). For Italian original see Giovanni Boccaccio, *Decameron*, in *Tutte le opere di Giovanni Boccaccio*, vol. 4, ed. Vittore Branca (Milan: Mondadori, 1976), 12, secs. 19–20 (hereafter *Decameron* [1976]).

84v 8–20 "Non … riceptacoli" *or* "One finds … den of thieves" • very closely mirrors Boccaccio's description of Florence during the first plague outbreak of 1347–48. See *Decameron* (1998), 9 for English translation and *Decameron* (1976) 13, secs. 23–4 for Italian original.

uile brighate riceptacoli. Gli huomini **[9v]** uanno solj, et in cambio di amicj, gente di questo pestifero morto infesta si riscontra. L'uno parente se pure l'altro truoua, ò frattello il fratello, ò la moglie il marito, ciaschuno ua largo: et che piu? schifano i padri et le madrj i proprij loro figliuoli, et gl'abbandonono. Chi fiori, chi odorifere herbe, chi spugne, chi anpolle, chi palle di diuerse spezerie composte in man porta, ò, per meglio dire, al naso sempre tiene: et questi sono i prouedimentj. Sonci certe canoue anchora, oue si distribuisce pane; anzi per ricorre ghauoccioli si semina.

I ragionamenti ch'essere soleuano in piazza honoreuoli et in mercato [85r] utilj, in cose miserabili et meste si conuertano. Chi dice: il tale è morto, quell altro è malato, chi fuggito, chi in chasa serrato, chi allo spedale, chi in guardia, chi non si truoua: et simigliantj nuoue, atte con la sola immaginatione a fare Eschulapio, non ch'altri, amorbare. Molti uanno ricerchando la cagione del male; et alchuni dicono: gl'astrologi ci minacciono; alchuni: i profetti l'hanno predetto. Chi si ricorda di qualche prodigio; chi la qualita del tempo et la dispositione dellaria atta ad peste ne in colpa, et che tale fu nel mille trecento quarant'otto; et mille quattrocento settánt'otto et altre di tale maniera cose: in modo che daccordo tutti concludono, che non solo questa, ma infinti altri mali c'hanno a rouinare adosso. Questi sono i piacieuoliragionamenti che a ogn'hora si sentono. Et benche con una sola parola dinanzi a gl'occhi della mente questa nostra miserabile patria porre ui potessi, dicendouj che di uederla tutta dissimile, et diuersa da quella che

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84v 20 brighate riceptacoli] brigate riceptaculi | solj] soli | amicj] amici **21** gente] *A* genti | morto] morbo | L'uno] Luno **22** ò] /o/ | ò] /o/ | ciaschuno] ciascuno **23** madrj] madri | proprij] proprii | figliuoli] figluoli **24** gl'abbandonono] gli abbandonano **25** spezerie] spezierie | ò] /o/ | meglio] meglo **26** prouedimentj] prouuedimenti • 'dimenti' *added by Machiavelli over erasure* **27** oue • *corrected from* doue | ghauoccioli] gauaccioli **85r 1** ch'essere] che essere | piazza] piaza **2** utilj] utili **3** serrato • *interlinear addition to replace deleted* fuggito | serrato] confitto **4** guardia • *final* 'a' *added above* 'i' *at extreme right of folio margin* | simigliantj • 'j' *corrected from* 'e' | con la sola • *interlinear addition to replace underlined, linear text* alle | con la sola] colla sola **5** Eschulapio] Esculapio | ch'altri] che altri | amorbare] ammorbare | ricerchando] ricercando **6** *B* et • *followed by indecipherable erasure* | alchuni] acluni | gl'astrologi] gli astrologi | alchuni] alcuni **7** l'hanno] lhanno | *B* Chi si ricorda chi si ricorda • *repetition deleted by Machiavelli* | prodigio • *emended from* prodigo **8** dispositione] *A* indispotizione | dellaria atta] *A* dell'aria alta **9** mille trecento … settánt'otto] 1348 et 1478 **11** c'hanno a … adosso] ci hanno ad … addosso **12** a ogn'hora] ad ogni hora **13** a gl'occhi] ad gli ochi **14** dicendouj] dicendoui | dissimile • *second* 's' *added linearly.*

one meets people infected with this deadly plague. Even if one parent finds the other, or a brother finds his brother, or a wife her husband, each one keeps a safe distance from their relations: and what is worse? Fathers and mothers spurn their own children, abandoning them. One holds blossoms, another odoriferous herbs, a third sponges, a fourth glass vials, and one carries in his hand (or it is far better to say, always held to his nose) small balls composed of diverse aromatic spices; and these are the precautions against the plague. I am certain that few shops, where bread is distributed, are still open; but there, the shop-goers infect each other and take home buboes.

The conversations which used to be honorable in the piazzas and profitable in the markets change to miserable and sorrowful themes: for example, one says: "such a one is dead, that other is sick, another fled, another is confined at home, such a one is in hospital, another is on the lookout, and yet another has disappeared"; and similar recent tidings, which by imagination alone would suffice to make none other than Aesculapius sick. Many go searching for the causes of the disease, and some say: "The astrologers threaten us with it"; others, "The prophets have predicted it." One recalls some marvel; one blames the quality of the weather, and the heavy air which swarms with plague, saying that it was the same in 1348 and 1478; and still more say similar things. There is such unanimous agreement that everyone concludes, that not only this, but infinite other sicknesses have laid us to ruin. These are the pleasant topics which are heard continually. And though I might be able to place our miserable native city before your mind's eye with only a single word, by saying that you might imagine it altogether different and completely unlike that which

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84v 21–4 "L'uno … gl'abbandonono" *or* "Even if one parent … abandoning them" • once again, mirrors the *Decameron* almost exactly. See *Decameron* (1998), 10 for English translation, and *Decameron* (1976), 13–14, secs. 24–25 for Italian original.

84v 24–6 "Chi fiori … i prouedimentj" *or* "One holds blossoms … against the plague" • is lifted almost directly from the *Decameron*. See *Decameron* (1998), 9 for English translation and *Decameron* (1976), 13–14, sec. 24–5 for Italian original.

84v 26 "canoue" *or* "shops" • is a Florentine/Tuscan term.

84v 27 "ghauoccioli" *or* "buboes" • are swellings in the lymphatic system, which usually presented in the groin, armpits, and neck. This sympton of bubonic plague was famously described by Boccaccio in the *Decameron*. For English translation, see *Decameron* (1998), 7; for Italian version, see *Decameron* (1976), 10–11, secs. 10–12.

85r 5 "Eschulapio" *or* "Aesculapius" • is mentioned in the *Decameron* (1998), 14 and *Decameron* (1976), 19, sec. 48 for Italian original.

85r 9 "mille trecento quarant'otto" *or* "1348" • is highlighted in the *Decameron* (1998), 6 and *Decameron* (1976), 9–10, sec. 8.

uedere soleui gia, u'immaginassi che niuna cosa meglio che tale comparazione in uoi medesimo fatta dimostarlaui **[10r]** potrebbe; uolgio nondimeno, che considerare piu particularmente la possiate, perche la cosa inmaginata alla uerita di quello che si inmagina al tutto mai non aggiugne. Ne mi pare da poteruela dipigniere con migliore exempio che con il mio:percio io ui descriuero la uita mia, accio da essa possiate tutta quella di qualunque altro misurare.

Sappiate, adunque, che ne giorni di lauoro, partendomi io di casa in su quella hora che i terresti uapori tutti dal sole sono risoluti, per andare al mio solito exercizio; fatti prima alchuni rimedi, et presi contra alla uenenosa infermita certi antidoti, ne quali (quantunque l'egregio Mingho medico dica che sono coraze di carte), ho fede certamente, et non piciola; non sono molti passi da quella lungi, ch'ogn'altro pensiero conuiene, benche graue et da cose importanti, et necesarie la testa sgombri: perche il primo riscontro che si offerisce dinanzi a gl'occhi miei, per mio buono agurio, sono i becchini non quegli degl'amorbati, ma i consueti: i quali, come gia de pochi, hora de molti morti si dolgano, perche pare a quegli che tanta abondanza generi loro carestia. Et chi harebbe mai creduto che uenissi tempo, nel quale eglino la sanita di qualunque infermo desiderassero, come ueramente di desiderare giurauono? Io facilmente lo credo, perche morendo in altro tempo et d'altro male, ne potranno all'usato

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85r 15 u'immaginassi • *emended from* non u'inmaginassi • non *underlined, probably for deletion*|u'immaginassi] ui immaginassi|niuna] *A* nunia (*sic*) |meglio] meglo **15–16** comparazione] comparatione| uolgio] uolgo **17** considerare • 'ar' *added over indecipherable erasure*|*B* considerare piu • *added over indecipherable erasure by Machiavelli* **18** inmaginata] imaginata|inmagina] immagina **19** exempio] exemplo **23** terresti] terrestri|dal] da il|risoluti] resoluti **24** exercizio] exercitio|alchuni] alcuni|rimedi] remedii|contra] contro **25** infermita] infirmita **25–6** (quantunque … carte)] quantunque … carte **25** mingho] mingo **26** medico • *interlinear addition with caret indicating placement; B Omit*|et • *interlinear addition* **26–7** piciola] piccola|ch'ogn'altro] ch ogn altro **28** *B* et da cose importanti, et necesarie da quella la testa • *interlinear addition in L. Strozzi's hand with caret indicating placement* • quella *struck through for deletion*|la testa] da la testa **29** dinanzi a gl'occhi] ad gli ochi **30** agurio] augurio|becchini] bechini|degl'amorbati] degli ammorbati|*B* consueti {i quali crudelmente si dolgano che in tanta mortalita alcuno per loro non noiosa}: i quali • 'i quali … noiosa' *hypothetical transcription of line struck through for deletion in ink used by Machiavelli; A Omit* **31** a] ad|abondanza] abbondanza **33–4** desiderassero] desiderassino|d'altro|daltro **35** all'usato] allo usato

you used to see (as nothing demonstrates for you better than such a comparison) I, nevertheless, want you to be able to understand the matter in greater depth, because the thing imagined compared with the truth of that which one imagines never adds up. Nor am I able, it seems to me, to illustrate this with a finer example than my own life: therefore I will describe my life to you, so that by it you might measure all the rest.

You know then that on work days, I leave my house before that hour in which all the terrestrial vapors are evaporated by the sun, to go about my usual business; having first taken some antidotes against the venomous infirmity, in which (although the distinguished doctor Mingo said that they are breastplates of paper), I certainly have faith, and not a little; I am not many steps away from home, when every other remaining thought that gathers in my mind, although grave and of things important and necessary, clears from my head, because the first things that present themselves to my eyes, by my good luck, are gravediggers. Not those gravediggers of the infected, but the usual type: who, at one time by the few, but now by the many, dead are grieved, because it seems to them that such an abundance begets their future famine. Whoever would have believed that the time would come, in which they might have wished for the good health of all of the ill, as they swear truly to yearn? I think easily, because if those dying of the plague died in another time and of another disease, they would make their usual profit. And so passing by San Miniato between the towers, where I was at one time nearly deafened by the din of the wool beaters, and the whistles and rough conversations of the wool traders, I found an all-pervasive and unwanted silence. Continuing on my journey, in the vicinity

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85r 17–18 "la cosa … non aggiugne" *or* "the thing … never adds up" • resonates with Machiavelli's *Il Principe*, chap. 15. "But since my intention is to say something that will prove of practical use to the inquirer, I have thought it proper to represent things as they are in truth, rather than as they are imagined" (Machiavelli, *The Prince*, trans. George Bull [London: Penguin, 1995], 48). The Italian original is "Ma, sendo l'intendo mio scrivere cosa utile a chi la intende, mi è parso piu conveniente andare drieto alla verità effettuale dalla cosa, che alla immaginazione di essa" (Machiavelli, 'Il Principe,' in *Opere*, vol. 1, ed. Corrado Vivanti [Rome: Einaudi, 1997], 159).

85r 22 "partendomi io di casa" *or* "I am not … from home" • it seems very likely that Strozzi began his "tour" of Florence at the family palace, the Palazzo Strozzi, where he had lived since 1503. See chapter 1 for more detail.

85r 25 "Mingho" • a reference to Mingo/Mengo Bianchelli/o also known as Mingo/Mengo da Faenza. For more on Bianchelli, see appendix 3.

guadagnare. Et cosi passando da Samminiato infra le torre, doue per lo [85v]
strepido de camati, et fischi, et ragionamenti ciompeschi assordare quasi
solea, trouo grande, et non molto desiderato silenzio. Segui il mio uiaggio,
et uicino a Mercato Nuouo incontrai a cauallo la morria: di che ingannato
per la prima uolta **[10v]** ne rimasi; imperoche, ueggiendo da lungi da bianchi
caualli, quantunque come neue non fussero, portata una lettica, che fusse
qualche gentil donna ò persona di gran lignaggio, ch'andasse a suo diporto,
mi pensai. Ma ueggiendoli di poi attorno, in uece di seruitori, seruigiali di
Santa Maria Nuoua, non fu mestiero che d'altro domandassi. Non mi bas-
tando questo, et per poterui del tutto piu amplia notizia dare, la mattina del
lieto principio di maggio, entrai nella admirabile, et ueneranda chiesa di
Santa Reparata; doue tre sarcedoti soli erano: l'uno la messa cantando di-
ceua; l'altro per coro et organo seruiua; il terzo per confessare in una sedia,
quasi di mura cinta, nel mezzo della prima naue si posaua, tenendo i ferri in
gamba nondimeno, et alle braccia le manette: che cosi dal uicario ordinato
stato gl'era, accio potessi le canoniche tentationj meglio in tanta solitudine
schifare. Le diuote della messa erano tre donne in gamurrino, uecchie scri-
gniute, et forse zoppe; et ciaschuna separatamente nella sua tribuna si

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85v 1 *B* cosi • *interlinear addition in L. Strozzi's hand with caret indicating placement* | Samminiato] Saminiato | torre] torri **2** strepido] strepito | quasi • 'si' *covered by different, probably later ink* **3** silenzio] silentio | *B* Seguito • 'to' *expunged by Machiavelli* | *B* il mio • *writtenby Machiavelli over indecipherable erasure* **4** a cauallo] ad cauallo | morria] moria **5** ueggiendo] ueggendo | *B* imperoche ueggendo • *written over indecipherable erasure by Machiavelli* **6** caualli] cauagli | *B* neue • *written over indecipherable erasure by Machiavelli* **7** gentil] gentile | ò] /o/ | ch'andasse] che andasse **8** ueggiendoli] ueggendogli | seruitori] seruidori **9** d'altro] daltro **9–10** bastando • 'st' *obscurred by ink splash* | amplia notizia] ampla notitia **12** Santa Reparata • *emended from* Santa Maria Reparata • Maria *underlined, probably for deletion* | sarcedoti] sacerdoti | l'uno] luno **13** l'altro] laltro | *B* per coro … seruiua • *interlinear addition in L. Strozzi's hand; to replace the underlined* in maneria da se stesso alzando: gli organi seruiua, *in Machiavelli's hand* **14** *B* quasi • *marginal addition, with caret indicating placement, in L. Strozzi's hand* | mezzo] mezo | tenendo • 'endo' *added over indecipherable erasure* **16** gl'era] gli era | potessi] potesse | tentationj] tentationi **17** gamurrino] gammurrino **17–18** scrigniute • 'te' *added over indecipherable erasure* | scrigniute] scrignute | **18** *B* forse • *interlinear addition, with caret indicating placement, in L. Strozzi's hand* | *B* si • *interlinear addition, with caret indicating placement, in L. Strozzi's hand.*

of the Mercato Nuovo, I encountered the horseman of the pestilence: by whom being deceived for the first time I remained there; because, seeing from afar white horses (although they weren't of snow-whiteness) bearing a litter, which I thought to myself might contain some noble woman or person of ancient lineage, who rode about for his amusement. But seeing around them then, instead of servants, nurses from Santa Maria Nuova, there was no need to inquire further concerning the person's heritage or occupation. This not being enough for me, and in order to give you all the more extended news of the morning of the joyous beginning of May, I entered the admirable and venerable Church of Santa Reparata; where there were only three priests: the one was singing Mass; the second serves as the choir and organ; the third hears confessions in a chair surrounded by the wall, in the middle of the first nave. Nevertheless, he wore irons on his ankles, and handcuffs on his wrists: because he was ordered to be thus by the Vicar, so that he might be able better to escape temptations in canonical solitude. The pious attendants of the Mass included three women in ragged cloaks – old bent and perhaps lame women; each separately in her own pew

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85v 1 "Samminiato" or "San Miniato" • is an ancient church (the facade dates from c. 1090) located in the Oltr'Arno, outside of the city's walls, on a hill overlooking the entirety of Florence (Peter Murray, *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance* [New York: Schocken, 1986]: 16, 17). If Strozzi began his walk through Florence at the Palazzo Strozzi, his *casa*, then he must have crossed the Arno on his way to San Miniato, but he did not mention how, or by which bridge, he crossed to the Oltr'Arno.

85v 2 "camati" *or* "wool beaters" • is probably a Florentine dialectical form derived from "scamati," the sticks used to beat and prepare raw wool.

85v 4 "Mercato Nuovo" • is known today for its famous Loggia (c. 1547) and its bronze boar, both of which have become synonymous with the Mercato Nuovo (La Loggia del Porcellino). Neither of these were present when Strozzi wrote the *Pistola*, c. 1522. Once again, Strozzi fails to mention where he crossed the Arno on his journey from San Miniato to the Mercano Nuovo.

85v 9 "Santa Maria Nuoua" • For more detail on the history of the Hospital of Santa Maria Nuova, see K. Park and J. Henderson, "'The First Hospital among Christians': The Ospedale di Santa Maria Nuova in Early Sixteenth-Century Florence," *Medical History* 35 (1991): 164–88.

85v 12 "Santa Reparata" • here Strozzi refers to the Duomo, Santa Maria del Fiore, using the name of the cathedral that predated it. Visitors to the Duomo may still see the foundations of Santa Reparata, which are partially intact under the Duomo, by descending a set of steps found on the right-hand side of the nave as one faces the high altar of the cathedral. The present facade of the Duomo was added in the nineteenth century. During Strozzi's life, the facade of the Duomo resembled the red brick façade of San Lorenzo, which is a short walk from the Duomo. For more on the Duomo, see Murray, *Architecture*, 24, 26, 27, 28, 31, 32, 36, 38, 41, 47, 55, 100, 137.

staua; fra le quali solo dell'auolo mio la nutrice mi parue riconoscere. Erano tre similmente gli deuoti, i quali, senza mai uedersi, ad gruccie uolgeano il coro, dando taluolta d'occhio alle tre amorose: cose ueramente da non le potere credere se non chi uiste l'hauesse. Ond'io, a guisa, di chi uede quello che uedendolo apena il crede, rimasi stupefatto; et dubitando che il popolo no fusse, come in si celebre mattina solito era, dietro alli armeggiatori ridotto in piazza, la con tale speranza mi conduxi: doue armeggiare uidi, in cambio

di **[11r]** huomini et caualli, croce, bare cataletti et tauole, sopra le quali [86r] diuersi morti si uedeuono portati da bechini: i quali, per necesita furono dal Barlachi per malleuadori degli eccelsi Signori chiamati, che in quell'hora la cirimonia faceuono della entrata loro. Et credo, per auentura, che non bastando il numero de uiui, si seruisse del nome d'alcuno de morti, secondo il costume chiamandogli; benche ad niuno come a Lazero aduenisse.

Non mi parendo questo spettacolo degno ò sicuro, molta dimora non ui feci; et non potendo credere che in qualche parte della citta non fusse maggior frequenzia di nobilj ristretta, uerso la famosissima piazza di Santa Crocie i miei passi riuolsi: la doue uiddi un grandissimo ballo tondo di becchini, che ad alta uoce ben venga, ben uenga il morbo diceuano. Questo era il lieto loro ben uenga maggio. L'aspetto de quali, insieme con il tuono della canzona, et le parole di quella, al tanto di dispiacere alli miei occhi,

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85v 19 fra] tra | dell'auolo] dello auolo | *B* mi parue riconoscere • *interlinear addition, with caret indicating placement, in L. Strozzi's hand, to replace the underlined* ricognobbi, *in Machiavelli's hand* **20** uedersi • *followed by five equally spaced periods* | ad gruccie] *A omit* | uolgeano] uolgeuono **21** d'occhio] dochio **22** Ond'io, a] Onde io, ad **23** apena] appena | no • *either Florentine variant spelling of* non, *or Strozzi failed to include a tilde to indicate abbreviated form of* non | no] non **24** alli] ad gli **25** in piazza] impiaza **86r 1** caualli] cauagli **2** uedeuono] uedeuano | necesita] necessita **3** Barlachi] Barlachio | eccelsi] exelsi | quell'hora] quella hora **4** cirimonia] ceremonia | entrata • *interlinear addition, probably to replace the underlined* tornata | *B* entrata • 'ent' *illegible due to ink splash* | auentura] aduentura **5** d'alcuno] dalcuno **6** a Lazero] ad Lazaro **7** ò] /o/ | molta] molto **8** feci] fei **8–9** maggior frequenzia] maggiore frequenti **9** nobilj] nobili **10** Crocie] Croce | *B* riuolsi • 'ri' *interlinear addition in L. Strozzi's hand with caret indicating placement* | uiddi un] uidi uno | grandissimo • 'o' *emended from* 'i' **11** uoce] boce | *first* venga • *begins with small* v | ben venga … il morbo] ben uenga il morbo • *emended from* ben uenga il borbo morbo • 'borbo' (*sic*) *struck through for deletion by Machiavelli* **12** L'aspetto] Lo aspetto | con] *A* col **13** *B* dispiacere • 'dis' *interlinear addition with caret indicating placement in L. Strozzi's hand* | occhi] ochi

kneeling; among them only one, my grandfather's nurse, seemed to recognize me. There were three similarly devoted old men, who, without ever seeing one another, shuffled about the choir on crutches, at times giving the eye to the three lovelies. Truly, one could not believe such things if one had not seen them in person. Therefore I, in the manner of one who witnessed that spectacle (seeing it hardly makes one to believe it) remained stupefied. Doubting that the people would not, as they usually did, swarm behind the equestrians into the piazza (as is usual on so celebrated a morning); with such hope I partook there. Where, bustling about I saw, in exchange for men and horses, crosses, coffins, stretchers and tables, on which those diverse dead persons were carried by grave diggers. They (the grave diggers) were summoned by Barlacchi out of necessity, as supporters of the lofty Signori, who made their ceremonial entrance at that moment. And I believe, per adventure, that if the number of the living was not sufficient, he would have read out the names of some of the dead, calling them out according to the custom; even though nothing like the resurrection of Lazarus would happen.

As this spectacle seemed neither worthy nor very safe to me, I did not stay long; and as I was not able to believe that any other part of the city was, with greater frequency, filled with nobles, I directed by steps toward the most famous piazza of Santa Croce. There, I saw a tremendous number gravediggers dancing in a circle and singing loudly, "Hearty welcome, plague; hearty welcome, plague." This was their merry "Hearty welcome, May." Their appearance, together with the thunder of their song, and its words, offered as much

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85v 24–5 "armeggiatori" *or* "equestrians" • For more detail, see Richard Trexler, *Public Life in Renaissance Florence* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), 306–12. In that passage, Trexler discussed one role of the "armeggiatori." They were horsemen and banner bearers. It seems that Strozzi is referring to "equestrians" who usually led the feast day procession and the accompanying crowd into the piazza • the "piazza" referenced here was almost certainly the Piazza della Signoria, where Strozzi would have walked by the Palazzo Vecchio.

86r 3 "Barlachi" *or* Barlacchi • a reference to Domenico Barlacchi or Barlacchia. He was "herald of the Florentine Signoria." See Judith Bryce "The Theatrical Activities of Palla di Lorenzo Strozzi in Lyon in the 1540's," in *The Theater of the English and Italian Renaissance*, ed. J.R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (New York: St. Martin's, 1991), 55–69. See 61–2, 67n29 for more details. Also see the famous study by F. Pintor, "Ego Barlachia recensui," in G.S.L. 1, vol. 39 (1902), 103. "Barlachia" was a pseudonym sometimes adopted by Machiavelli himself.

86r 9–10 "piazza di Santa Croce" "*piazza* of Santa Croce" • was and remains a grand public space, surrounded by wonderful examples of Florentine Renaissance mercantile and domestic architecture. The jewel of the piazza is the Church of Santa Croce, which during Strozzi's time, like the Duomo, lacked a marble façade.

86r 11 "becchini" *or* "gravediggers" • for more detail on these characters see *Decameron* (1998), 15–16, and *Decameron* (1976) 21, secs. 57–9.

et orechi porsono, quanto gia l'honeste fanciuille con la loro lieta canzone a quelli di piaciere porgeano: tal che, senza dimora, in chiesa mi fuggi. Doue, faciendo le consuete mie deuotioni, ne ueggiendoui pure un testimonio, senti, benche lontana, una affannata et spauenteuole uoce; alla cui aduicinandomi, alle sepulture del chiustro uiddi in terra distesa in ueste negra una pallida et trauagliata giouane, la ciu effigie piu morta che uiua mi pareua, rigando le sue belle guancie d'amare lagrime, hora l'auree sue belle sparse trecie stracciandosi, hora il petto hora il uolto con le proprie mani, battendosi da muouere a pieta uno marmo: **[11v]** di che io oltre modo spauento, et dolore presi. Al lei, nondimeno, cautamente appressandomi, le dissi: Deh perche si fattamente ti lamenti? Ond'ella, perch'io non la conosciessi, subito con il lembo della ueste il capo si coperse. L'atto, come è natural cosa, mi fe cresciere di conoscerla il desio: la paura, dall'altro canto, che della
pestifera contagione machiate fusse, i passi ritardaua; dicendole nondimeno, che di me non temesse, perche quiui ero per darle et consiglio et aiuto, trouandosi ella da si grauosi affanni oppressa: et tacendo ella, soggiunsi, che non mi partirei se prima lei partire non uedesse. Prese, benche alquanto stesse, pur poi, come donna dassai et animosa, partito di scoprirsi, dicendo: Quanto sono stolta! se nel cospetto d'uno popolo non ho temuto, hora d'un huomo solo, quale alli miei bisogni sobuenire cerca, temero? Era, per l'habito, et per la smisurata passione transfigurata, si che per la uoce piu che per la effigie la riconobbi. Et dimandandole di [86v]

86r 14 l'honeste] le honeste **15** quelli] quegli | porgeano] porgeuono **16** faciendo] facendo | mie deuotioni • *emended from* mie orationj deuotioni • orationj *underlined for deletion* | ueggiendoui] ueggendoui **16–17** testimonio] testimone **18** *B* alle sepulture del chiustro uidi • *interlinear addition with caret indicating placement in L. Strozzi's hand* • uidi *underlined* | uiddi] uidi | distesa in] distesa uidi in • uidi *underlined, probably to be replaced by interlinear* uidi *cited in previous note* **19** *B* piu --- morta • *large ink splash*; *probably an intentional deletion following* piu **20** guancie] guance | d'amare] di amare | l'auree] lauree **21** trecie] trecce **22–3** oltre modo] a modo **24** Ond'ella perch'io] Onde ella perche io **25** conosciessi] cognoscessi | L'atto] Lo atto **26** cresciere] crescere | conoscerla] cognoscerla | desio] disio **26–7** dall'altro] dallaltro
86v 5 partito] *A omit* **6** Quanto] *A* Quando | cospetto d'uno] conspetto duno **7** d'un] duno **8** l'habito] lo habito **9** uoce] boce | riconobbi] ricognobbi

displeasure to my eyes and ears, as formerly the happy songs of the honorable young maidens used to bring me pleasure; so that without hesitating, I escaped into the church, where I offered my usual devotions, without a single witness, when I heard from a long way off, a worried and fearful voice. To which drawing myself, I saw laying on the ground, near the fresh graves in the cloister, in black raiment, a pale and afflicted maiden, whose face appeared more that of a corpse than a living woman. (She had) bitter tears streaming down her beautiful cheeks, (and she was) tearing out strands of her beautiful tousled hair, (and) beating her breast and then her face with her own hands. Seeing such a thing would move a block of marble to pity her. Thus, I was stricken with pain, though exceedingly frightened of her. Nevertheless, I cautiously approached her and asked: "Oh why do you lament so grievously?" She immediately covered her face with the hem of her dress, so I would not be able to recognize her. This act, as is natural, increased my desire to know her. However, the fear, of the other song which those spotted with the plague contagion sang, slowed my steps; but, I told her, that she should not be frightened of me, because I was, finding her oppressed by such severe anxieties, here to give her council and help. Calming her, I added, that I would not leave until I could see her face. She turned, hesitating somewhat, then presently, like a spirited and courageous woman, took to uncovering herself saying: "Am I so foolish, that I was not anxious in the presence of the multitude, but will now be terrified of only a single man, who certainly seeks to attend to my needs?" She was so transfigured by her garb and by her immeasurable passion, that I recognized her more by her voice than by her form. When I asked her the cause of such affliction; she exclaimed "Woe unto me! I do not know how to

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86r 15 "in chiesa mi fuggi" *or* "I escaped into the church" • the church (or basilica) in question is the Santa Croce. For more on the history of this famous Franciscan edifice, see Murray, *Architecture*, 24, 26, 27, 28, 39, 42, 44, 237. It is interesting to note that the church's marble facade, like the Duomo's, was not added until the nineteenth century.
86r 18 "chiustro" *or* "cloister" • could be a reference to the "Primo Chiostro," where the visitor will also find the Pazzi Chapel, designed by Filippo Brunellischi, or the "Secondo Chiostro," also designed by Brunelleschi.

tanta afflitione la causa: Hei misera à me! dis'ella; non saperla fingere. Duolmi et poi mi duole ch'ogni mia contentezza ho persa, quale, sebene mill'anni uiuesse, non sono per ricoperare. Et quello che piu m'afflige, è, ch'ancora io morire non posso. Ne mi dolgo della pestilenziosa stagione, ma della trista mia fortuna, che fe che l'indissolubile amoroso nodo, da me con tanta arte, et diligenzia fabbricato, non tenne il fermo; da cui la comune nostro rouina nacque, donde uersono hora sopra il sepolchro **[12r]** dello infelice, et fido amante mio le amare lagrime. Ò con che diletto lo hebbi io piu uolte in queste gia felice, et hora infelice braccia! Con che uaghezza contemplano i suoi begli, et lucenti occhi! Ò con qual piaciere l'auide labbia mie alla sua odorifera bocha acostai! Ò con quanto contento unii et strinsi il mio infiammato al suo non freddo candido, et giouinil petto! Hei mie lassa! Con che dolcezza uenimo noi piu uolte all'ultima amorosa felicita, unitamente sadisfacendo a nostri desiderj! Ne appena hebbe queste parole dette, ch'ella subito in terra in guisa tale si distese, che tutti mi si arriciarono i peli adosso, temendo che morta

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86v 10 à] ad | dis'ella] dixe ella **11** ch'ogni] che ogni | contentezza] contenteza **12** mill'anni] mlle anni | ricoperare] recuperare | m'afflige] mi affligge **12–13** ch'ancora] che anchora **13** pestilenziosa] pestilentiosa **14** *B* fe • *added by L. Strozzi over indecipherable erasure* | l'indissolubile] lindissolubile • 'disso' *added by Machiavelli over indeciperhable erasure* **15** diligenzia] diligenza | comune] commune **16** sepolchro] sepulcro **17** Ò] O | Ò con … io • *emended from* Ò co con che diletto ui hebbi io • co *struck through for deletion;* ui *struck through for deletion* **18** uaghezza] uagheza **19** occhi] ochi | *B* Ò] *Omit. Written in B as* /O/ *by Machiavelli. Rendered as* Ò *in reading text, following Strozzi's usual accent placement* | con qual piaciere] con qual lieto con qual piacere • con qual lieto *struck through for deletion by Machiavelli* | l'auide] le auide **20** acostai!] accostai! • *interlinear addition in L. Strozzi's hand with caret indicating placement* | Ò] O | et strinsi] *A* et *Omit* • et *followed by blank space* | infiammato] infammato **21** et giouinil] *A* et non giouenil • non *struck through for deletion* | mie] me | dolcezza] dolceza **22** all'ultima] alla ultima | sadisfacendo] sodisfacendo | a] ai **23** desiderj] desiderii | Ne • *interlinear addition, probably to replace underlined* et | ch'ella] che ella **24** si arriciarono] *A* saricorono

hide it. I grieve and afterwards it grieves me more that I have lost all my contentment, which, even though I might live for 1,000 years, I am not going to recover. And that which pains me even more is that I am still unable to die. I do not complain about this pestilential season, but rather about my unhappy fortune – that the indissoluble lovers' knot, which so much of my artistry and diligence fabricated, cannot remain tied; from this our common ruin was born and from thence my loving tears are now poured upon the grave of my ill-fated, faithful lover. Oh with whom I had delighted so many times in these once joyful and now miserable arms! With what delight I gazed into his beautiful and shining eyes! Oh what pleasure when I pressed my longing lips to his fragrant mouth! Oh with such great contentment I united and squeezed my burning breasts to his warm and pure and youthful chest! Oh wretched me! So frequently and with such bliss we came to that final amorous joy, simultaneously slaking our desires!" She had no sooner said these words, than she immediately collapsed upon the ground in such a way, that all of my hair stood on end, fearing that she might be dead.

non fusse; perche gl'occhi haueua chuisi, i labbri smorti, il uiso piu che lauanti pallido, et quasi senza senso: solo pareua che il moto del del suo affannoso petto alquanto di uita dimostrasse. Ond'io con quella carnale affettione che si richiede, leggiermente pare cominciai a stropricarla; allargandola dinanzi, per benche molta stretta da se stessa
non fusse; hora di drieto, hora dinanzi riuolgendola; cosi usai seco tutti [87r]
quei rimedi che gli smarriti spiriti fare sogliono risentire: feci si finalmente, ch'ella gl'agrauati occhi suoi riaperse, et si caldo sospiro **[12v]** mando fuora, che se di cera io fusse stato, liquefatto mi saria. All'hora io, confortandola, dixi: Ò semplice et suenturata donna, ad che qui piu dimorite? Se dagli parenti uostri ò da uicini ò da quegli che uostra conoscienza hanno, si soletta fusse trouata, che si dir'ebb'egli? Doue è la uostra prudenzia e la uostra honesta? Ah misera à me! Diss'ella: che l'una non hebbi mai, l'altra ho insieme con quel soaue sguardo de begl'occhi perduta; de quali, non altrimenti che dell'aqua i pesci si nutriscono, mi nutria. A cui risposi: se i consigli miei, donna, appo uoi sono di ualore alcuno, priegoui che meco, non per amore di me, che indegno ne sono: ma per l'honore uostro uogliate

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86v 25 gl'occhi] gli ochi **26** lauanti] lo auanti | pallido] inpallidito | *B* et quasi senza senso • *marginal addition in L. Strozzi's hand, with caret and % sign indicating placement; replaces the underlined* i polsi tutti smarriti *in Machiavelli's hand* **27** Ond'io] Onde io **28** leggiermente] leggermente | pare • *interlinear addition lacks carets to indicate placement, though it is written above and between* leggiermente *and* cominciai, *producing the reading above* | a stropricarla] ad stropicciarla

87r 1 drieto] dietro **2** quei] quegli | rimedi] rimedii | sogliono] soglono **3** ch'ella] che ella | gl'agrauati] gli aggrauati | occhi] ochi **4** All'hora] Alhora **5** Ò] /O/ | dimorite • 'te' *is an interlinear addition harmonizing this emended plural, formal word with the emendations to personal pronouns that follow* | dimorite] dimori **6** uostri • *emended by L. Strozzi from* tuoi *with interlinear addition* | uostri] tuoi | ò] /o/ | ò] /o/ | uostra • *emended by L. Strozzi from* tua *with interlinear addition* | uostra] tua | conoscienza] conoscenza **7** dir'ebb'egli] direbbe egli | uostra • *emended by L. Strozzi from* tua *with interlinear addition* | uostra] tua | prudenzia] prudenza **8** uostra • *emended by L. Strozzi from* tua *with interlinear addition* | uostra] tua **8** à] a | Diss'ella] Dixella | l'una] luna | l'altra] laltra **9** quel] quello | soaue] suaue | *B* sguardo • 's' *added by Machiavelli over indecipherable erasure* | begl'occhi] begli ochi **10** dell'aqua] della acqua | nutriscono] nutriscano **12** l'honore] lo honore **12–13** *B* uogliate uenire • *emended by Machiavelli from* uenire uogliate *with interlinear Roman numerals; I over* uogliate *and II over* uenire.

Because, her eyes had closed, her lips had gone pale, and her face even paler than it was before and only semi-conscious: only the movement of her grief-stricken breast showed a little life left in her. Where I, with that carnal affection that requires it, lightly began to caress her body; unlacing her (dress) in front, although she was not very tightly laced; now laying her on one side, and now turning her (to the other); and so I used on her all those remedies that the lost spirits are made accustomed to resent. Finally, as I did so, she opened her troubled eyes again, and she exhaled so warm a sigh, that if I had been made of wax, I would have melted. Then comforting her, I said: "Oh simple and unfortunate woman, will you continue to stay here? If your parents, your neighbors, or acquaintances, found you here all alone, what might they have said? Where are your prudence and your respectability?" "Oh my misery!" she said, "I never had the former and the latter, I have lost together with that sweet look of his beautiful eyes; a gaze which nourished me as the water which nourishes fishes." To that I responded: "if my councils, Lady, are of some worth to you then you appreciate that I want you, not for love of me, for I am unworthy of it, to come with me; for the sake of your honor, which, will soon be entirely restored; even though it is somewhat obscured at present, more by the malignity of other people's wicked tongues, than fault of your own. Because, I know many women who fled from their husbands, sheltering with others

uenire; il quale, se malignita delle altrui maluagie lingue, che per colpa uostra in breue interamente recupererete. Perche, quante ne conosch'io che da mariti loro fuggitesi, sono da altri che da parenti racolte state? Quante da i uicinj et loro congiunti in piu graui errori scoperte, che hoggi sono et le belle et le buone tenute? Humana cosa è certamente il pechare: basta bene tal'hora il rauedersi. Si che, se per l'auuenire farete portamenti buoni, uedrete che tosto, tosto ui dico, si dira che stata ingiustamente infiamata siete. In questa maniera persuadendola **[13r]** alla sua propria casa la condussi.

Era gia il sole si in cima del cielo salito, che l'ombre apparieno minorj; quand'io solingo, si come stato era sempre, a prendere il desiato cibo me ne tornai; et riposato alquanto, di nuouo ad ricerchare la citta mi ricondussj, dirizando il mio cammino uerso il nuouo tempio dello Spirito Santo; doue non era quantunque l'hora fusse, alchuna preparatione del diuino officio. Li frati per la chiesa, benche pochi rimasi uene fussero, passeggiauono a capo alto; et che buono numero di loro erano morti, m'affermorono; et piu ancora ne morrebbe, perche uscire di quiui non poteuano, et prouisti da uiuere non erano. Et non ui dico se delle candele per la chiesa accendeuono, credo forse perche i loro morti al buio non andassero: tale ch'io mi parti ben tosto, cacciato piu dal timore del cielo che del morbo tante erano de frati le spesse beneditionj. Et tornandomene per uia Maggio, essendo di maggio le calendi, non uidi pure un segno che mi rappresentassi il

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87r 13 *B* delle altrui • altrui *underlined by L. Strozzi, probably for deletion, though above reading is retained as it is superior to A* | delle altrui] *A* dellaltre | *B* maluagie • *marginal addition by L. Strozzi* | maluagie] *A* maluagia **13–14** che … recupererete] *A* che … ricuperere • *interlinear addition with caret indicating placement* | *B* interamente • 'ter' *obscurred by spreading ink* **14** conosch'io] cognosco io **15** racolte] raccolte **16** uicinj et] uicini e **17** pechare] peccare **18** tal'hora] talhora | rauedersi] raduedersi | l'auuenire] lo aduenire **19** ui dico, si dira] *A* si dira ui dico | infiamata] infamata **20** siete] siate **22** l'ombre] lombre • 'e' *emended from* 'a' *by Machiavelli* | minorj • 'j' *emended from* 'e' *by L. Strozzi* | minorj] minori **23** quand'io] quando io | prendere] prehendere | desiato] disiato **24** ricerchare] ricercare | condussi] ricondussj **25** *B* dirizando • *marginal addition by L. Strozzi, probably to replace underlined* et, *and* dirizai *noted in next textual comment* | *B* Santo; dirizai doue • dirizai *underlined for deletion* **26** l'hora] lhora | alchuna] alcuna | officio] ofitio **27–8** passeggiauono a capo alto] a capo alto passeggiauano • a capo alto *marginal addition by L. Strozzi with % sign indicating placement* **28** m'affermorono] mi affermorono **29** ancora] anchora | poteuano] poteuono **30** ui dico] ui diro • 'iro' *written over indecipherable erasure; Machiavelli's hand* **31** ch'io] che io **32** ben] bene | dal] da il | morbo tante] morbo et tante • et *interlinear addition by L. Strozzi with caret indicating placement* **33** beneditionj] beneditioni | essendo] sendo **34** un] uno

than their parents. How many have been uncovered in much graver errors by their neighbors and relatives, who today are held to be the beautiful and the good? Sin certainly is a human thing: but enough good sometimes comes of it to amend one's ways. So that, if you will behave properly, you will see that immediately (immediately I say to you) it will be said that you have been unjustly slandered." In this manner persuading her, I led her to her own house.

The sun had already climbed to the top of the sky, so that the shadows appeared smaller, when I found myself alone, as I always was. So, I sat a while, desiring to take my food. I rested a little and set out once again to wander the city, directing my steps toward the new temple of the Holy Spirit (Santo Spirito); where there was no sign of preparation for the divine service evident, even though it was the proper time. The friars in the church (I stayed there although they were few) were furiously pacing to the high altar and back. They declared to me that a good many of them were dead; and that yet more were sure to die, because they were not allowed to leave, and did not have any provisions to keep them alive. And I need not tell you how they light up the candles of the church with their profanities, I believe perhaps so their dead would not have to find their way out in the dark. Thus, I was driven away, more by the fear of Heaven than plague, the friars were repeating the same benedictions so frequently. And turning into the Via Maggio, since it was the Calends of May, however I did not see anything that looked like

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87r 24 "di nuouo … ricondussj" *or* "I rested a little … to wander the city" • the next portion of Strozzi's walk took him back across the Arno to the Santo Spirito quarter.
87r 25 "nuouo tempio dello Spirito Santo" *or* "the new temple of The Holy Spirit" • a reference to the basilica that was designed by Filippo Brunelleschi. The basilica, located in the Oltr'Arno, was not completed until decades after Brunelleschi's death in 1482.
87r 33 "uia Maggio" *or* "Via Maggio" • Here Strozzi is making an obvious wordplay, taking the "Via Maggio" because it was the first of May (*maggio*). It is likely that the "Via Maggio" received its name following Dante's use of *maggio* as "Broadway" or the "Broadest Way". These interesting ideas, as they pertain to the Tuscan dialect and place/street names in Florence, were developed by Rudolph Altrocchi in 'Trinità or Trínita?' *Italica* 26, no. 1 (1949): 57–61. For particular references to the "Via Maggio," see 60–1. Strozzi made his way from the Oltr'Arno by the "Via Maggio" and the "Santa Trinita" bridge, to the city centre and the Church of Santa Trinità. The "Via Maggio" and the "Ponte Santa Trinità" were constructed as a part of an urban renewal campaign by the Florentine comune in the late thirteenth century. See Roger J. Crum and John T. Paoletti, eds., *Renaissance Florence: A Social History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 198.
87r 34 "maggio le calendi" *or* "Calends of May" • see chapter 2, nnote 5 of this study for coverage of Machiavelli's *Minuta*, c. 1522, which references this exact period.

maggio;
anzi, sopra il mezzo del ponte trouai un morto, a cui non ardiua apressarsi [87v]
alchuno: et entrando nella anticha chiesa di Santa Trinita, un sol huomo,
ma bene qualificato, ui trouai. Et domandandolo io, quale cagione nella
citta in tanto periglio il ritenessi, mi rispose: lo amore della patria, la quale
da tutti i suoi poco amoreuoli cittadini era abbandonata. A cui io dissi: che
molto meno erraua chi **[13v]** cerchaua alla patria mantenersi, da quella per
qualche mese dilungandosi per poterli altra uolta giouare, che quegli che
non gli giouando, in pericolo d'abbandonarla sempre si metteuano.
All'hora egli: se il uero ho a dire a chi sello conosce, non la patria, ma
quella sconsolata che tu uedi si diuotamente genuflexa, per lo cui amore
disposto sono mettere la uita, qui mi ritiene. Paruemi ch'alla eta sua matu-
ra tanta caldezza non si richiedesse; et percio gli dissi, che in questi si for-
tuneuolj casi, il padre il figliuolo, la moglie il marito addandonaua. Et egli:
tale è il mio amore che ogni grado di sanguinita auanza; et che, se a schi-
fare la peste lo stare lieto è ottimo rimedio, in presenzia della dama amata
era essa letizia, et fuora di lei tanto duolo gl'auerebbe, che per quello solo
di uita amaramente uscirebbe; et che come quiui solo trouato l'haueua,
solo ancora et unico intra gl'altri amori era l'amore suo: et essendo innam-
orato, et uiuere uolendo, uicino stessi alla amata; non essendo, da il suo
essempio mosso, mi innamorassi, se schifare la pestifera mortalita uoleuo:
et che ancora io ero a tempo. Io, a cui simili ragionamenti non piacquero,
giudicando l'amore una peste tanto piu perniziosa quanto piu lunga, sen-
za altro dirgli, mi parti. Et sopra il solitario in questi tempi pancone degli

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87v 1 mezzo] mezo | un] uno **2** alchuno] alcuno | anticha] antica | di Santa • 'di' *emended to* della *with interlinear addition, though* 'di' *is the better reading* | Santa *is underlined, probably to be replaced by the interlinear* diuina, *though* Santa *is the better reading* | di Santa Trinita] della diuina Trinita | un sol] uno solo **4** periglio] periglo **5** A] Ad **6** cerchaua] cercaua **7** poterli] potergli **8** d'abbandonarla] di abbandonarla **9** All'hora] Alhora | a chi sello conosce] a chi se lo conosce • *marginal addition, in L. Strozzi's hand, with caret indicating placement* **10** diuotamente] deuotamente | lo] il **11** ch'alla] che alla **11-12** matura] *A Omit* **12** dissi] dixi **12–13** fortuneuolj] fortuneuoli **13** moglie] mogle **14** a] ad **15** presenzia] presentia | della dama amata • amata *is interlinear addition above and to the right of* dama | della dama amata] della amata **16** letizia] letitia | gl'auerebbe] gli aduerrebbe **17** l'haueua] lo haueua **18** gl'altri] gli altri | l'amore] lo amore **19** stessi] *A* stesse | essendo] sendo | da il] dal **20** essempio] exemplo | mi innamorassi] minnamorassi | uoleuo] *A* uolendo **21** ero] *A* era **22** l'amore] lo amore | perniziosa] pernitiosa **23** in] *A* a

May to me; in fact, I found a dead man in the middle of the bridge, who no one dared approach: and entering the ancient church of Santa Trinità I found only one seemingly well-born man there. I asked him for what reason he remained in a city faced with such danger and he answered me: "For love of my native city, which every one of her little-loving citizens has shunned." To whom I said, "he errs much less who seeks to preserve himself for his native city so that he might be able to serve it at a later time than those who, feigning to serve it, exposed themselves to the danger of leaving it forever." To which he replied: "if I must tell the truth to one who knows it already, it is not our native city that keeps me here, but it is that disconsolate lady who you saw so devotedly genuflecting - for whose love I am prepared to lay down my life." It seemed to me that such burning passion was not befitting of one of his mature age so therefore I said to him, "that even in the luckiest of houses that the father abandons his son and the wife her husband." And he responded: "Such is the degree of my love, that it surpasses every type of blood relation." He carried on like this: if to avoid the plague to be happy is an excellent remedy, then to be in the presence of her love was tremendous joy, and away from her love such grief that it alone would cause him to depart this life bitterly and alone as he was found here; so unique, he argued, was his love among the various types of love; and he concluded by saying that being in love, and wishing to live, that I should remain close to my lover. Not being so yet, but moved by his example, he urged me to fall in love to escape the deadly plague; and told me that I still had time. I was not persuaded by those arguments, judging love a much more dangerous and longer lasting pestilence. Without saying anything else to him I left. And on the nowadays deserted Spini bench

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87v 2 "chiesa di Santa Trinita" *or* "the church of Santa Trinità" • is a fine and beautiful church, which is famous primarily because it was probably designed by Nicola Pisano. For more background, see Murray, *Architecture*, 24. The frescos of the Sassetti Chapel, located in Santa Trinità, are very helpful, however, when attempting to visualize Florence's urban landscape, and especially the locations of Santa Trinità and the Ponte Santa Trinità. This fresco by Domenico Ghirlandaio is discussed below.

87v 5 "poco amoreuoli cittadini" or "little loving citizens" • Machiavelli used this "cittadini amorevoli" on only two occasions: in his *Minuta*, c. 1522, and in his *Istorie fiorentine*. I suggested in chapter 2 that Strozzi's vocabulary here might have influenced Machiavelli's, as the *Minuta* and the *Istorie* were written at roughly the same time as the *Pistola*. See appendix 4, *Minuta*, 26.24–5. I used the vocabulary and word usage search functions at "Intratext.com" to gather this information.

Spini, il uenerabile padre frate Alexo, che per fuggire forse la peste s'era uscito della Regola: che forse quiui per confessare fuori di chiesa qualche sua diuota attendeua, ritrouai: et da lui inteso, **[14r]** come nella bene proportionata, et ueneranda chiesa di Santa Maria Nouella, dond'egli per li suoi buoni portamenti stato era rimosso, si adunauono per li amorosi amaestramenti degli festiui et caritatiuj frati, piu donne che in ogni altra qual si uoglia, chiesa; meco, benche non molto secondo la sua uoglia, il menai, perche [88r] temeua il fratticello di quello che certo, se senza me gito ui fosse, aduenuto gli saria. Nondimeno, fermandosi poco, anzi apena salutato l'altare maggiore, perche molto diuoto non era, si parti, et credo ch'al suo pancone per fornire l'opera si ritornasse. Io mi restai per udire la lieta compieta de fratti; doue se ben non uidi, quale solea, il gran numero delle gentili donne, et nobili huomini admiranti gl'angelichi uolti, et i diuini portamenti de richi, et ben

87v 24–6 *B followed here:* frate Alexo … ritrouai | *A* Alexo che • che *underlined, probably for deletion* **24–5** *B* che per … Regola • *marginal addition by L. Strozzi with caret indicating placement* • *A* che per … Regola • *marginal addition struck through for deletion, though probably initially intended to replace the linear text* che forse et per auentura quiui per confessare fuori di chiesa qualche sua diuota attendeua ritrouai, *also underlined, probably for deletion. At the foot of the folio is another underlined passage with a caret indicating placement after* Alexo • che forse per usare meglio la carita del confessare hor questa hor quella Donna fuora di chiesa s'era uscita della Regola et per auuentura et da lui inteso. *Reading(s) provided by A too uncertain to rely on, therefore B followed here.* **26** da] dal **27** dond'egli] donde egli | li] gli **27–8** suoi buoni] *A* buoni suoi **28** adunauono] adunauano | li] gli | amaestramenti] admaestramenti **29** caritatiuj] caritatiui | qual si uoglia] quale si uolga

88r 1 chiesa; meco • *emended from* chiesa il menai meco • il menai *underlined, probably for deletion* | secondo • *interlinear addition with caret indicating placement* | uoglia] uolga **2** temeua] temea | fratticello] fraticello | ui • *written over indecipherable word* | fosse] fusse **3** apena] appena | l'altare] laltare **4** diuoto] deuoto | ch'al] che al **5** l'opera] lopera | doue • *interlinear addition to replace underlined, linear* donde **6** ben] bene **7** gl'angelichi] gli angelici | i diuini] diuini | ben] bene

I came upon the venerable father Alessio, who perhaps to flee the plague remained away from the monastery: perchance he was waiting there to confess one of his penitents outside the church; I learned from him that in the perfectly proportioned and venerable church of Santa Maria Novella, from where he, for his good behavior, was excluded, more ladies than one could wish for were assembled there (perhaps owing to the amorous instruction of the festive and charitable brothers) than in any other church. Although against his wishes, I took him with me, because the good friar feared what would certainly have happened to him if he had gone there without me. Nevertheless, staying only briefly, in fact scarcely having saluted the high altar, because he was never known for his piety, he left; so, I believe, that he could return to work at his bench. I remained to hear the friars' delightful Compline. There, even though I did not, as usual, see the great number of gentlewomen or noblemen admiring the ladies' angelic faces and the divine allure of their rich and well designed dresses, which together with the sweet music, invite souls to play

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87v 23–4 "pancone degli Spini" *or* "Spini Bench" • is referenced by Machiavelli in his *Mandragola*. See act 4, scene 2, where he wrote of the "Pancone delli Spini," in Pasquale Stoppelli, *La Mandragola: Storia e filologia, con l'edizione critica del testo secondo il Laurenziano Redi 129* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2005), 223. The Spini Bench no longer exists. In fact, the palace to which it was once attached is now the Salvatore Ferragamo factory and store. Formerly the Palazzo Spini, then the Spini Feroni, and now the Palazzo Spini Ferragamo, it has been radically transformed from its late medieval, early Renaissance beginnings. In order to see the "pancone degli Spini" as it probably looked when Strozzi knew it, enter the church of Santa Trinità, proceed to the high altar, and look to the back right-hand corner of the church. There, in the Sassetti Chapel, are Domenico Ghirlandaio's frescos from the life of St Francis. The central fresco, on the back wall of the chapel, depicting St Francis resurrecting a young boy, clearly shows the piazza outside the church, the Palazzo Spini, the Ponte Santa Trinità, and the "pancone degli Spini." This bench also hosted the famous quarrel between Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo Buonarotti. For more on this episode, see Ridolfo Mazzucconi, *Leonardo da Vinci* (Florence: Vallecchi, 1943), 308.

87v 24 "frate Alexo" *or* "Father Alessio" • was a Dominican friar associated with Santa Maria Novella. This same "Father Alessio" plays a small part in saving the life of Benvenuto Cellini. See Cellini's *The Autobiography of Benvenuto Cellini*, trans. J. Addington Symonds (New York: P.F. Collier and Son, 1910), 33. For Italian original see Benvenuto Cellini, *Vita di Benvenuto Cellini Scritta da Lui Medesimo* (Florence: Adriano Salani, Editore Viale Militare, 1903), 27–8.

87v 27 "Santa Maria Novella" • one of Florence's most important churches, associated with the Dominican Order, where Santa Croce was associated with the Franciscan Order. The architect of the church is unknown, though tradition ascribed authorship to two unnamed Dominican friars. The church's façade was designed by Leon Battista Alberti in 1458. See Murray, *Architecture*, 56–8 for further detail.

intesi habiti, insieme con le dolci musiche, gl'animi di qualunque piu all'amoroso giuocho che alle celesti cogitationi inuitanti, ui trouai nondimeno men solitudine che in niuno altro luogo; onde conobbi quanto tal chiesa fauorita et fortunata infra l'altre chiamare si potesse: percio pensai di dimorarui in fino all'ultima hora. Doue rimasse ancora, benche gia sera fusse, per udire forse, com'io, la compieta, solo una bella giouane in habito uedouile; della cui bellezza se appena confidassi parlare potere, conoscho ch'io mi ingannerei: pure, per sodisfare in parte, con silenzio non la passero; et uoi quello piu che manchare conoscerete alla narratione mia, ui ci inmaginerete.

Ella era prima, benche sedendo sopra gli marmorei gradi alla **[14v]** cappella maggiore uicinj, in sul sinistro fiancho aguisa d'affannata persona si posassi, con il candido braccio la alquanto inpallideta faccia sostenendo, d'una conueneuole grandezza alla statura d'una poporionata, et ben composta donna: si che quinci cognoscere si poteua, che le parti tutte di quel corpo talmente insieme erano conformi, che se di uestrij funebri non fossero ricoperte, di mirabile bellezza agl'occhi miei sarieno apparse. Ma lasciando questa parte libera da comtemplarsi alla uostra inmaginatione, quello solo che palese mi fu desriuero. Candido auorio sembrauono le fresche sue et dilicate carni, et si gentili et morbide,
da riseruare d'ogni quantunque leggiero toccamento forma, non meno [88v]
che d'un uerde prato la tenera et rugiadosa herbetta gli sospesi uestigi de leggieri animaletti facci. Gl'occhi, di cui meglio sarebbe il tacere che dirne

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88r 8 gl'animi] gli animi **8–9** all'amoroso giuocho] allo amoroso gioco **10** *A* solitudine • 'i' *emended from* 'e' | luogo] loco | *A* conobbi *emended from* conobi | conobbi] cognobbi **11** l'altre] laltre **12** all'ultima] allultima | rimasse] rimase **13** udire] udir | com'io] come io **14** bellezza] belleza | conoscho] cognosco **15** ch'io] che io | mi ingannerei] mingannerei | silenzio] silentio **16** conoscerete] cognoscerete **17** inmaginerete] immaginerete **19** maggiore • *interlinear addition with caret indicating placement* | uicinj • 'j' *emended from* 'a' | uicinj] uicini | fiancho] fianco | aguisa] agguisa | d'affannata] daffannata **21** d'una] duna | conueneuole • *marginal addition by L. Strozzi probably to replace the underlined, linear* comunale | grandezza] grandeza | d'una] di una | ben] bene **22** poteua] potea **23** quel] quello | uestrij] uestiti **24** fossero] fussero | bellezza agl'occhi] belleza ad gli ochi **25–6** inmaginatione] immaginatione **26–7** sembrauono] sembrauano **27** dilicate] delicate

88v 1 *B* da • 'a' *added by L. Strozzi over indecipherable erasure* | riseruare d'ogni] riserbare dogni **2** d'un] dun | uestigi] uestigii **3** Gl'occhi] Gli occhi | meglio] meglo

love games so much more than to heavenly meditations. I found there less solitude than in any other place; as a result I knew how this church might be able to call itself the most favored and highly blessed than any other. Therefore I decided to stay there until the very last. Where remained, although it was already evening, perhaps, like me, to hear the Compline, only one beautiful young woman in widow's clothes; whose beauty, and I know that I delude myself, I scarcely have the power to describe to you in words. However, to satisfy you at least in part, I will not proceed in silence; but, by imagining us there, you will supply that which my narration lacks.

At first she was (although now sitting on the marble steps near to the *cappella maggiore*) reposing on her left side in the manner of an anxious person, supporting her somewhat pale face with a snow-white arm. She was of an agreeable size and proportionate stature for a finely formed woman. So that even from here one could conclude that all the parts of such a body were so well shaped, that if stripped of her mourning raiment, they would present a wondrous beauty to my eyes. But leaving this part free for you to gaze upon in your imagination, I will describe the part that is made manifest. Her smooth and tender skin resembles spotless ivory yet so soft and delicate as to preserve the traces of even the lightest touch, no less th an the fine grass of a green and dewy meadow preserves the prints made by dainty little animals. Her eyes, concerning which it might be better to say nothing at all than say only a little, seem to be two shining stars which, from time to time, she lifted with such grace, that one saw paradise opened. Her delightful brow, the length of which ends in for her splendid and beautiful eyes; about which it appears that Love jests and always flits about, shooting his arrows and wounding this, or that loving

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88r 15–89r 2 "pure, per sodisfare … risentirebbe" *or* "However, to satisfy … might have been aroused by them" • closely resembles Machiavelli's description of the "servant of Circe" who restores Machiavell's flaccid "virtù" in his *L'Asino*. All English references to Machiavelli's *L'Asino* are from "The Golden Ass," in *The Chief Works and Others*, vol. 3, trans., Alan Gilbert (Durham: Duke University Press, 1965), 750–72 (hereafter *The Ass*); all references to the Italian original are from "L'Asino," in *Opere,* vol. 3, ed. Corrado Vivanti (Rome: Einaudi, 2005), 51–78 (hereafter *L'Asino*).

88r 18–19 "cappella maggiore" • commissioned by Giovanni Tornabuoni, and executed by Domenico Ghirlandaio and his workshop. See P. Simons, 'Patronage in the Tornaquinci Chapel, Santa Maria Novella, Florence," in *Patronage, Art and Society in Renaissance Italy,* ed. F.W. Kent and P. Simons (Oxford: Clarendon, 1987), 221–51 (cited by Paola Tinagli, *Women in Renaissance Art: Gender, Representation, Identity* [Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997], 81n12.

88v 3–4 "Gl'occhi … Stelle parieno" *or* "Her eyes … shining stars" • "Each eye appeared a little flame, so shining, so clear and so / lively that all vision however acute was lost in it" (*The Ass*, 759, ll. 58–9). And "Ciascuno occhio pareva una fiammella, / Tanto lucente, si spegne in quella" (*L'Asino*, 62, ll. 58–9).

poco, due accese stelle parieno; quali si a tempo et con tale leggiadria grazia alzaua,che il paradiso aperto si uedeua. La lieta fronte, di cui lo spazio con giustissima misura terminaua, si chiara et rilucente, che spechiandosi in quella il semplice Narcisso, non manco di se stesso che nel limpido fonte in uaghito si sarebbe: sotto la quale l'arcate, sottilissime, ben profilate, et negre ciglia ad gli splendidi begl'occhi facieno coperchio; intorno a quei pare che scherzi et uoli sempre Amore, et indi sue suelte scharchi, hor questo hor quell'amoroso cuore ferendo. L'**[15r]**orecchie, per quello ch'apparire ne potea, erano piciole, rotunde, et tali ch'ogni perito phisionomo essere di somma prudenzia segno giudichate l'harebbe. Ma che diro io della melliflua, et delichata boccha? Tra due piaggie di rose uestite et di ligustri posta, la quale in tanta mestizia pareua che d'uno celeste riso, non so come, splendesse. Basti ch'io mi credo che da quella pigli natura essempio, quando alchuna bellissima di nuouo produre al mondo ne intende. Le rosate labbia sopra gli eburnei et candidi denti, accesi rubini parieno et perle orientali insieme miste. Haueua da Junone del suauemente exteso naso la forma tolto:cosi come a Uenere delle candide et distese guancie.

Non lasciero la bellezza della sua suelte, biancha, et uezosa gola, degna certamente d'essere di pertiose gieme ornata. Le inuidiose ueste comtemplare non mi lasciauono il lacteo, uenusto et ben raccolto petto, da duoi picioli, freschi, et odoriferi pomi adorno, com'io mi credo, colti nello horto famoso,

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88v 4 a] al|et] *A Omit*|leggiadria grazia] legiadra gratia • legiadra, *is a marginal addition by L. Strozzi with a % sign indicating placement*; gratia *is underlined with series of dots* **5** uedeua] uedea|spazio] spatio **7** nel limpido] *A* nell'impido **9** ciglia] cigla|begl'occhi] begli ochi|a] ad **10** scharchi] scarchi **11** quell'amoroso] quello amoroso|cuore] core |L'orecchie] Le orechie **11–12** ch'apparire] che apparire **12** piciole] piccole|ch'ogni] che ogni|phisionomo] phisioniomo • *second* 'o', *an interlinear addition by L. Strozzi* **13** prudenzia] prudenza|giudichate l'harebbe] giudicate le harebbe|io • *not in B* **14** delichata boccha] delicata bocca **15** mestizia pareua] mestitia parea|d'uno] duno **16** ch'io] che io|essempio] exemplo|**17** alchuna] alcuna|produre] produrre **18** labbia] labbra **19** Junone • 'J' *emended to capital, over lower case* 'i'|Junone] iunone|*B* suauemente • *written as* sua[indecipherable erasure]uemente|*B* naso • *replaces* nastro • *struck through by Machiavelli* **21** lasciero] lascero|bellezza] belleza|biancha] bianca **22** d'essere] di essere|pertiose gieme] pretiose gemme|comtemplare • 't' *emended from* 'p'|comtemplare] contemplare **23** lasciauono] lasciauano|lacteo] latteo|picioli • *interlinear addition with caret indicating placement*|picioli] piccioli **24** com'io] come io|horto] orto

perfect measure, so bright and shining, that simple Narcissus, admiring himself in it, as in the limpid pool might have become infatuated with himself; below which the finely traced arches of her black eyebrows made a covering heart. Her ears, from what of them one is able to see, were small, round, and of such shape, that every expert physiognomist would have judged them a sign of acute prudence (or intelligence). But what can I say of the sweet and delicate mouth, situated between two cheeks adorned with delicate roses and lilies or of how, I know not, even in such sadness it seems that a celestial smile shines? But I know enough to believe that Nature will use this most beautiful one as a model when it desires to enrich the world once again. The rose colored lips upon the ivory and snow white teeth appear as fiery rubies mixed together with oriental pearls. From Juno, she has a delicately formed nose, as from Venus that of her playful and flowery cheeks.

I will not leave out the beauty of her slender, white and graceful neck, which certainly should be ornamented with precious gems. Her envious clothes did not give me leave to gaze on the creamy, beautiful and finely sculpted chest, adorned with two little fresh and sweet smelling apples,

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88v 8 "l'arcate" *or* "brow" • "Narrow arched and black were her brows, because at the shaping / of them were all the gods, all the high and heavenly councils" (*The Ass*, 760, ll. 64–6). And "Sottili, arcati e neri erano I cigli / Perch'a plasmargli fur tutti gli Dei, / Tutti I celesti e superni consigli" (*L'Asino*, 63, ll. 64–6).

88v 14 "delichata boccha" *or* "delicate mouth" • "I do not know at all who made her mouth if Jove did not do it / with his own hand; I do not believe any other hand could have / made it" (*The Ass*, 760, ll. 70–2). And "Io non so già chi quella bocca fesse; / Se Giove con sua man non la fece egli, / Non credo ch'altra man far la potesse" (*L'Asino*, 63, ll. 70–2).

88v 14 "ligustri" *or* "lillies" • perhaps "ligustrum volgare," a flowering shrub native to many parts of the world, including the Mediterranean.

88v 18 "denti" *or* "teeth" • "Her teeth were more beautiful than ivory, and her tongue moved / like a serpent between them and her lips" (*The Ass*, 760, ll. 73–5). And "I denti più che d'avorio eran begli; / E una lingua vibrar si vedeva, / Come una serpe, infra le labbra e quegli" (*L'Asino*, 63, ll. 73–5).

88v 19 "naso" *or* "nose" • "Of that which slopes down from these [her brow] I should like to say / something that would partly correspond to the truth, but I am / silent about it because I could not describe it" (*The Ass*, 760, ll. 67–9). And "Di quel che da quei pende dir vorrei / Cosa ch'al vero alquanto rispondesse, / Ma tacciol, perchè dir non lo sparei" (*L'Asino*, 63, ll. 67–9).

88v 21 "gola" *or* "neck" • "Her neck and chin were also visible, and other beauties / enough to make happy every gloomy and unsuccessful lover" (*The Ass*, 760, ll. 79–81). And "Il collo e 'l mento ancor vedeasi, e tante / Altre bellezze, che farina felice/ Ogni meschino e infelice amante" (*L'Asino*, 63, ll. 79–81).

88v 23 "ben raccolto petto" *or* "finely sculpted chest" • "I continued to pass my eyes over all her various parts as low as / her breast, at the splendour of which I [am still] kindled, / but seeing farther was refused me by a rich and shining coverlet / with which that little bed was covered" (*The Ass,* 759, ll. 88–93). And "Io venni ben con l'occhio discorrendo / Tutte le parti sue infino al petto, / A lo splendour del quale ancor m'accendo; / Ma più oltre veder mi fu disdetto / Da una ricca e candida coperta, / Con la qual coperto era il cicciol letto" (*L'Asino*, 63, ll. 88–93)

delle Hesperide; i quali, per la saldezza loro auestimenti non cjedendo, la bellezza et tutte le loro qualita a risguardanti dimostrauono; in tra quali una uia n'appariua per la quale camminando **[15v]** alla somma beatitudine si peruerrebbe. La candida, et delicata mano, quantunque di parte della bellezza del leggiadro uiso ne priuase, col mostrare se stessa ne ristoraua; quale era lunga, sottile, espedita, et di minutissime
et lucide uene profilata, con i diti stietti, et suaui, et forse di tale uertu, che [89r]
per i loro tocchamenti qualunque uecchio Priamo si risentirebbe.

Io non ueggiendo all'intorno alcuno il cui rispetto ritenere mi douessi, et ella con i pietosi occhi suoi porgendomi ardire, me gli accostai, et dissj: Graziosa donna, se il cortese domandare non u'è noioso, piacciaui dirmi qual cagione qui si lungamente ui ritiene: et s'io alli bisogni uostri porgere posso alcuno aiuto. Et ella: come uoi forse, aspettato ho de frati la compieta in uano. Li bisogni miei sono tali, che, non che uoi, ogni quantunque minor persona giouare mi potria. L'habito dimostra ch'io sono del mio diletto sposo priua, et quel che piu mi duole, è che egli è di peste crudelmente morto; ond'io ancora in periglio ne resto, et pero, se senza altrui giouare, a uoi stesso nuocere non uolete, state alquanto piu lontano. Le parole, la uoce, il modo, et la cura**,** che mi parue, che della salute mia tenesse, mi trafissero il core: si **[16r]** che nel foco entrato per lei saria, nondimeno per non le dispiaciere uie piu che per il pericolo mi ritenni, dicendole: perche si sola dimorate? Perche sola sono rimasa. L'ho hauere compagnia piaccierebbeui? Altro non desio, che honestamente acompagniata uiuere. Et io, quantunque per auanti con donna accompagniarmi uolto non fusse: uistoui di si uenusto, et grazioso

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88v 25 *B* Hespedperide • 'ped' *struck through for deletion by Machiavelli*| saldezza • 's' *emended from* 'c'|saldezza] saldeza|cjedendo • 'j' *operating as* 'i', *emended from* 'r|cjendendo] cedendo **26** bellezza] belleza|a] ai|risguardanti] riguardanti|dimostrauono] dimostrauano **27** n'appariua] ne appariua **29** bellezza] belleza|priuase] priuasse **30** espedita] expedita

89r 1 uertu] uirtu **2** tocchamenti] toccamenti|qualunque uecchio • 'qualunque' *underlined*| *B* qualunque il uecchio • qualunque *is an interlinear addition by L. Strozzi;* il *is underlined, probably for deletion, producing the same reading as A* **3** all'intorno] allo intorno **4** occhi] ochi|dissj] dixi **5** Graziosa] Gratiosa|domandare] dimandare|u'è] ui è **6** lungamente] lunghamente|s'io] se io|alli] ad gli **8** miei] mia **9** l'habito] lhabito|ch'io] che io **10** egli è] *A* gl'è **11** ond'io ancora] ondio anchora|periglio] periglo|a] ad **12** modo] *A* mondo **14** dispiaciere] dispiacere **16** L'ho] Lho|piaccierebbeui] piacerebbeui **17** acompagniata] accompagnata **18** accompagniarmi] accompagnarmi|grazioso] gratioso

which I believe were grown in the famous orchard of the Hesperides. But, by the manner in which they refused to yield to her dress, they demonstrated their beauty and firmness; and between them flashes a way, at the end of which, the wanderer might reach the ultimate bliss. Her snow-white and delicate hand, although it might deprive me of part of the beauty of her elegant visage, provided its own refreshment. It was long, slender, capable and outlined with the smallest and shining veins, with the fingers straight and soft and perhaps of such virtue, that by their touches even old Priam might have been aroused by them.

I, not seeing anyone, out of respect for whom I ought to restrain myself, and she inspiring courage in me with her compassionate eyes, approached her and said: "Gracious Lady, if a courteous question is not noisome to you, might it please you to tell me for what reason you stay here for so long? And may I offer some aid to you?" To which she responded: "Like you perhaps, I have waited for the brothers' Compline in vain. My needs are such that even a lesser man than you could be useful to me. My clothes display that I am deprived of my beloved husband, and my pain is all the more for he died of the cruel plague, and thus I remain in peril. And, if therefore, you do not want to expose yourself to harm, remain at some distance." Her words, her voice, her manner, and the care that she seemed to have for my safety, pierced my heart so, that I would walk through fire for her. Nevertheless, fearing more to displease her, than the danger of the

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88v 24-25 "horto famoso, delle Hesperide" *or* "famous orchard of the Hesperides" • the trees of this mythic orchard, tended by nymphs (the Hesperides) produced golden apples, said to offer immortality to those who ate of their flesh. Strozzi's age (roughly forty years old in 1522), the widow's apparent youth, and the beauty of her breasts (though covered by her mourning weeds), imply that Strozzi believed he would have been reinvigorated by the love and sex offered by this young woman.

89r 1 "uertu" *or* "virtue" • loss of "virtù" and "impotence" and vice versa are intertwined throughout Machiavelli's *L'Asino*. For an astutely written assessment of this topic see Michael Harvey's 'Lost in the Wilderness: Love and Longing in *L'Asino,*' in *The Comedy and Tragedy of Machiavelli: Essays on the Literary Works*, ed. Vickie B. Sullivan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000):120–37. Interestingly, here in the *Pistola* it is the woman's "virtue" that restores the man's.

89r 8–9 "minor persona" *or* "lesser man" • might also be rendered as a "younger man."

89r 14 "nel foco entrato" *or* "walk through fire" • on 7 April 1498, Savonarola begrudgingly allowed a representative from his own Dominican Order, Fra Domenico, and a Franciscan opponent, Fra Francesco di Puglia, to stage a "fire" walk: both priests were supposed to pass through a large fire to find out which order had God's blessing and support. In the end, Fra Francesco backed out of the challenge. As Strozzi was in Florence's great Dominican church, one wonders if he was referencing that event, though in a perverse manner. See Lauro Martines, *Fire in the City: Savonarola and the Struggle for the Soul of Renaissance Florence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 219–30 for an account of this episode.

aspetto, in cui bene misse natura ogni suo sforzo, et mosso a compassione de uostri affanni: con uoi sono disposto accompagnarmi; et se ben non molto è l'eta conueneuole, le faculta, et l'altre cose mie sono tali, che ui potro forse contentare. Di uoi huomini, diss'ella, sempre furano le promesse lunge, et la fede corta, se io ho a memoria bene molte cose passate. Risposile: chi sa prudentemente eleggiere, d'altri non si fida che di chi ragioneuolmente fidare si deue: et pero non s'ha mai di se stessa apentere. Et ella: poi che il cielo, dattore di tutti i beni, innanzi mi u'ha porto (quantunque piu uisto non u'habbi) che di me non habbi cura particulare credere non posso, et percio se di me ui contentate, mi parrebbe oltre modo errare se et io di uoi non mi contentassi. Apena queste parole hebbe dette, che uno otioso frate, a testa ritta, atto piu al remo ch'al sagrificio, il nome di cui tacere **[16v]** mi uolgio per poterne meglio senza rispetto parlare,
come un falcone che dell'aria, uisto la preda, al terra piombi, inanzi s'auento [89v]
a si leggiadra, et delicata donna: et come se mille uolte parlato gl'hauesse: molto domesticamente, com'è il costume loro, le domando, se niente di bisogno l'occorreua di sua opera. Io glj risposi, ch'ella hora mai de bisogni suoi fornita s'era, et che non c'haueua luogo la fratescha sua carita.

Il ribaldone, che di gia spiritaua, et per fare forse un'altro parentado piu a gusto suo harebbe guasto il nostro: quantunque per gl'occhi sfauillassi et ne panni non capessi, storciessisi come all'incanto biscia, et uisto che da lei duramente accomiatato, et da me non amicheuolmente accarezzato era,

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89r 20 ben] bene **21** l'eta] la eta | l'altre] laltre **22** potro forse] *A* potranno | diss'ella] dixella | furano] furono **23** lunge] lunghe | molte cose • *interlinear addition, probably to replace the underlined, linear* 'alchuna delle' | molte cose] alcuna delle | passate • *emended from* passate historie • historie *underlined, probably for deletion* | passate] passate historie **24** Risposile • *emended from* Risposile: è lecito a chi scriue dire quello che egli uuole • 'è … uuole' *underlined, probably for deletion* | Risposile] Risposile: è lecito a chi scriue dire quello che uuole | chi • *emended from* ma chi • ma *underlined, probably for deletion* | chi] ma chi | eleggiere, d'altri] eleggire, daltri **25** s'ha] si ha **26** i beni] beni | u'ha] ui ha **27** u'habbi] ui habbi **28** modo] a modo **29** Apena] Appena **30** al remo] *A* alieno (*sic*) | ch'al] che al **31** uolgio] uolgo | poterne] *A* potere | meglio] meglo
89v 1 dell'aria] della aria | inanzi] innanzi | s'auento] si aduento **2** gl'hauesse] gli hauesse **3** com'è] come è **4** l'occorreua] le occorreua • le *emended from* gli *by L. Strozzi* | glj • *emended from* le, glj] gli | ch'ella] che ella **5** s'era] se era | c'haueua] ci haueua | fratescha] fratesca **6** un'altro] un altro **7** harebbe] haurebbe | gl'occhi] gli ochi **8** capessi] *A* caprissi | storciessissi] storcessi si | all'incanto] allo incanto **9** 'acc' • *struck through at line's end, and rewritten at the start of the next line,* accarezzato] accarezato

plague, I stopped short of her and asked: "Why do you stay here so alone?" [She replied] "Because I alone am spared [must] I have to have a husband in order to please you? I wish for nothing more than to live married honestly." [I replied] "And I, who before this moment never wished to marry a woman, now see your beautiful and gracious form, upon whom Nature bestowed its bounty, and moved to compassion by your afflictions, am resolved to marry you. Even though our age difference is not ideal, my means and other circumstances are such that I will perhaps be able to please you." She replied "With you men, ever were the promises great and the faith but small, if I have a good memory of things past." I responded to her: "One who knows how to choose prudently does not have to put his faith in the truthfulness of others and therefore never has to repent of what he has done." And she rejoined: "As Heaven, giver of all that is good, has brought you to me, I cannot doubt that you will show special care for me even though I have never seen you before; and consequently since you are pleased with me, it would be exceedingly wrong if I were not content with you." It was just after she spoke those words, that a lazy friar, head held high – an act suitable for rowing rather than sacrificing; whose name I will keep to myself so as to be able better to speak of him without any hesitation – as a falcon that sees its prey from the air swoops to earth, pounced on this elegant and delicate Lady; and, as if he had spoken with her a thousand times, with great familiarity as is these friars' custom, he asked if she lacked anything or if she needed his assistance. I told him, that she was never in need of his support, as she would never have a place for his brotherly love.

ristringiendosi ne suoi panni, non so che borbottando, se n'ando in mal'hora. Ne crediate pero ch'io subito cosi soletta la lasciassi; anzi, drietole sempre, infino a casa sua l'accompagnai, nella quale se, insieme con il mio core, in un tratto rinchiuse. Ond'io rimaso solo di si lieta et a me diletteuole compagnia, per non deuiare dal cominciato mio ordine affrettando i passi nell'egregio et lieto tempio di Santo Lorenzo mi condussi, la doue uedere consueto era, chi degl'anni miei il fiore s'haueua goduto. Ma fu la nuoua inpressione, tanto possente, che come quegli che del fiume Lethe gustono, d'ogni altra benche leggiadra donna **[17r]** mi dimentichai. Erano tutti i pensieri miei rimasi in quegli negri panni a uolti, attorno ai quali l'importuno et hipocrito frate uedere ad ogni hora mi pareua: tale gelosia in maniera mi tenea occupati gli spiriti, ch'altro considerare ò uedere non potea. Percio, parendomi in uano il tempo spendere, et desiando, come composto m'era, la desiata consorte riuedere, ben tosto a casa mi tornai; et ponendo alla tragicha consideratione dell'horrenda peste fine, al piaciere d'una futura comedia per la uicina sera m'apparechio.

Questo è quello dilettissimo compare mio ch'el primo di di maggio agl'occhi miei s'offerse. Quello che seguira di poi fatte le nozze intenderete che non sono prima per uolere ne per potere pensare ad altro.

Finis

89v 10 ristringiendosi] ristringendosi | n'ando] ne ando **10–11** mal'hora] mala hora **11** ch'io] che io | drietole] dietrole **12** l'accompagnai] laccompagnai | con • *emended from* col **13** Ond'io] Onde io **15** nell'egregio] nello egregio | et lieto • *interlinear addition with caret indicating placement* | Santo Lorenzo] San Lorenzo **16** degl'anni] degli anni | s'haueua] si haueua **17** Lethe] Lhete **18** d'ogni] di ogni | dimentichai] dimenticai **19–20** l'importuno] limportuno **21** ch'altro] che altro | ò] /o/ **23** m'era] mi era | a] ad **24** tragicha] tragica | dell'horrenda] della horrenda | piaciere] piacere | d'una] duna **25** comedia] commedia | m'apparechio] mi apparechio **26** ch'el] chel | di di • *second* di *is an interlinear addition with a caret indicating placement* **27** agli'occhi] alli ochi | s'offerse] sofferse | Quello che] Quelche | nozze] noze **29** finis] *Omit*

The scoundrel, acting as one already possessed, perhaps to fashion another relationship more to his taste, would fain have disturbed ours. Although he had such sparkling eyes, if he were undressed, he might have wriggled like an enchanted serpent, but when he saw that he was harshly dismissed by her, and not heartily greeted by me, he wrapped himself in his clothes again, jabbering about I know not what, and went off to some other misfortune. You must not believe that I left her there alone straight away, but rather, just behind her, I accompanied her to her house, in which, together with my heart, she locked herself. From whence I departed alone, so happy and intensely delighted by my sweet wife. So as not to deviate from the planned order of things, hastening my steps, I went to the distinguished and cheerful temple of San Lorenzo, where I hoped to see those who delighted with me in the flower of my youthful years. But it was a new emotion that overpowered me, and, as those who taste of the river Lethe, I forgot every other woman, however lovely. All of my thoughts remained wrapped in those black mourning clothes, which I constantly seemed to see about that importune and hypocritical friar; such tremendous jealousy overtook my spirits that I was not able to think on or see anything else. Therefore, to waste time here seemed vain, and as full of desire as I was, to see my longed-for wife again, at once I returned to my house; and putting an ending to this tragic consideration of the horrendous plague, I prepare myself for the pleasure of a future comedy for the following evening.

Well, that is what, my dearest friend, the first day of May offered to my eyes. Of that which will follow, you will learn about after the wedding; because before that I am not able to think of anything else.

End

89v 15 "tempio di Santo Lorenzo" *or* "temple of San Lorenzo" • is a basilica commissioned by Giovanni di Bicci de' Medici c. 1419 (St Lawrence was the patron saint of the Medici family). Giovanni provided the funding to tear down the ancient Romaneque church that stood where San Lorenzo does now, and he hired Filippo Brunelleschi to design the new building. Donatello and Michelangelo, along with other, lesser architects, had a hand in the building's final iteration. The monastic complex of which the basilica is the largest part also houses the Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, designed by Michelangelo and begun around 1525, and the Medici Chapel. Manuscript B of the *Pistola* is held in the Laurentian Library's collections.

89v 23 "a casa mi tornai" *or* "I returned to my house" • over the course of a single momentous though fictitious day, Lorenzo di Filippo Strozzi visited nearly all of Florence's major churches, he crossed the Arno four times, and he returned home ready to marry a beautiful widow. None of this is probable. In particular, the *Pistola* was most likely written in 1522; Strozzi was married then, and remained married until his wife died in 1527. Thereafter he remained a widower, and one who was serious about his faith and the preservation of his family.